Introduction to Philosophy
UCSC - Summer Session 1 - 2006
Paper #1 Topics

Pick one of the following topics:

A) Plato and Aristotle have fundamentally distinct accounts of the nature and source of knowledge. Give a brief summary of each of these two differing approaches to knowledge. Which of these two approaches seems most tenable to you? Justify your answer by offering your own arguments and by critiquing the opposing view. Treat the opposing view as a critique of your view in need of a response. In any case, be sure to consider and reply to potential objections to your own points/arguments. Your introduction should have a clear thesis statement of the following form: "In this paper I will argue that _____."

B) Descartes offers two main arguments for God's existence. Pick either his cosmological argument or his ontological argument. If you think the argument is a good argument, why so? What are some potential problems for, or critiques of, the argument? Defend the argument further by responding to those potential weaknesses. If, on the other hand, you think the argument is unsound, show how the argument has gone awry. How might Descartes reply to your objections? Why would those replies not stand up to your critiques? In either case, be sure to consider and reply to potential objections to your own arguments/points. You introduction should include a thesis statement of the following form: "In this paper I will argue that _____."

C) Descartes offers two arguments for Mind-Body Dualism. Pick either the argument from divisibility or the argument from doubt ability. If you think the argument is a good argument, why so? What are some potential problems for, or critiques of, the argument? Defend the argument further by responding to those potential weaknesses. If, on the other hand, you think the argument is unsound, show how the argument has gone awry. How might Descartes reply to your objections? Why would those replies not stand up to your critiques? In either case, be sure to consider and reply to potential objections to your own arguments/points. You introduction should include a thesis statement of the following form: "In this paper I will argue that _____."

Papers are to be at least five pages in length, typed and double-

spaced, using 12 point Times New Roman Font, with standard 1” margins. Papers are due promptly at the beginning of class next Thursday, July 13.